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STATE FOR EUR/PPD MKulla, ECA/PE/C/PY CLantz, EUR/ACE
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SUBJECT: France Nomination for FY-06 Benjamin Franklin
Transatlantic Fellows Initiative Summer Institute for Youth

REF: SECSTATE cable EUR/PPD dated 03/17/2006

1. SUMMARY: Post greatly appreciates the opportunity to nominate a student for the FY06 Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Summer Institute. We believe this type of project complements and enhances post's efforts to reach out to younger audiences, particularly those from more diverse backgrounds who would not otherwise have the opportunity to travel to the United States or to experience life in the United States. Our nominee is Arban Bislimi, a 19-year old Albanian refugee from Kosovo who has been living in France since the age of three. Mr. Bislimi has already demonstrated impressive leadership qualities as well as great ambition, and he comes highly recommended by the French Minister for the Promotion of Equal Opportunity. We believe that he will be an important addition to the mix of young people participating in this year's program. While he is not yet a citizen of France, Mr. Bislimi is very much involved in French society and has demonstrated a strong interest in serving the community. Mr. Arban Bislimi has full country team approval, as well as class namecheck clearance. End of Summary.

2. Nomination Format Information:

- 1A. Bislimi
- 1B. Arban
- 1C. None
- 1D. 05/29/86
- 1E. Pristina
- 1F. Kosovo
- 1G. France
- 1H. Kosovo
- 1I. Family address is Arban Bislimi, c/o Bislimi Labinot, 7 avenue Menival, 69005 LYON, or student address Cite Internationale Universitaire de Paris, Residence Andre Honorat (chamber 307), 21 boulevard Jourdan, 75014 PARIS.
- 1J. Home (parents) tel. No. is [33](4) 72-04-23-09, Student residence tel. No. is [33](1) 44-16-66-88; cellular tel. No. is [33](6) 33-98-44-15.
- 1K. Arban.bislimi@sciences-po.org
- 1L. Male
- 1M. No medical considerations; does not eat pork.
- 1N. Institut d'Etudes Politiques (Sciences-Po).
- 1O. First year of university studies, no major field selected yet.
- 1P. A. Bislimi has successfully completed his first university year at Sciences Po. He has also been very active within the Albanese association ILIRIA. (ILIRIA is a reference to "Illyrie," which is the former name for the Albanian region and people.). In Lyon, France, in April of 2005, Mr. Bislimi organized a conference on the people of Albania and Albanian culture for the purpose of bringing European societies closer together. The conference was attended by a large audience of local youth, as well as by the mayor of Vaulx-en-Velin.
- 1Q. After each year of high school, Mr. Bislimi worked as a maintenance employee and industrial cleaning assistant during his summer vacations. He also worked for six months during the school year while preparing for his baccalaureate (high school) degree.
- 1R. He was a member of the Youth Leadership Committee of the Albanese association ILIRIA, situated in the vicinity of Lyon. As a member of ILIRIA, Mr. Bislimi organized events and cultural activities, coordinated their mailings, and contributed in diverse ways to the functioning of the organization. (For example, he has translated Brecht's "Antigone" into Albanese, as well as translated a series of Albanese academic lectures into French for an audience in Lyon.)
- 1S. As he is an avid fan of table tennis and firmly believes in the importance of group sports to promoting good citizenship among youth, Mr. Bislimi founded a local table tennis club in Vaux-en-Velin in 2005, in conjunction with the city's Assistant Mayor for recreational activities. He has also created a local club to promote traditional Albanese dance, for which the city government has provided assistance.
- 1T. No previous travel or study experience in the United States.
- 1U. In English proficiency, Sciences-Po has scored Bislimi a

"3" (average) on a scale from 1-5 (where "5" is fluent.) His English-speaking capabilities were confirmed by public affairs via telephone interview. He understands English better than he speaks it, but we believe that he will have no problem participating in the seminar.

V. He is considering public affairs, finance, or sustainable development as his main area of study.

W.

Of Kosovar origin, Arban Bislmi arrived in France with his parents in 1989. He successfully completed his first year at Sciences Po this past semester. He has three brothers; one is studying law at the University of Lyon II, another is in high school, and another is in middle school. Arban is clearly a young man of strong character, intelligence and determination. He comes from a refugee family of very modest means (as a young man, his family lived in "Vaux-en-Velin," one of the most disadvantaged suburbs of the Lyon area.) Despite such setbacks, he has worked tenaciously to place himself in a position where he can achieve his goals and excel in doing so. In high school, he worked as a maintenance assistant, all the while preparing for his final baccalaureate exam, and sleeping an average of only five hours per night. Although he has not yet settled upon a final area of concentration for his university studies, he intends ultimately to obtain a doctorate degree in his chosen field. He is seriously contemplating studying Public Affairs, which in France leads to the the prestigious ENA (National School of Administration). Regardless of which career path he chooses, Mr. Bislmi has expressed a strong desire to address the problem of corruption and to work for greater social justice and social mobility in France. Arban also firmly believes in the importance of extra-curricular activities to educating well-rounded individuals who are willing and capable of contributing to civic society. He has participated in sports in his community and is actively involved in an association that brings together Albanian citizens in the Lyon area. Arban came to our attention through the French Minister for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities, Azouz Begag, who recently met with Ambassador and Emboffs. The Minister, who offered his perspective on the current state of affairs for France's minorities (septel), was enthusiastic about the possibility of working closely with the Embassy to promote better understanding between our two countries. When ACAO mentioned the various programs available for young leaders and minorities, Minister Begag expressed his interest in introducing us to some of the young people he has encountered through his work. Arban Bislmi is the young man he proposed as a candidate, and post agrees with the selection. We believe Arban is personally qualified, and post sees this nomination as an excellent opportunity to build new contacts and to develop new ideas in terms of outreach to minorities. Minister Begag, who has both studied and taught extensively in the U.S., is a firm believer in these types of exchanges and in their positive impact. We agree and recommend highly this candidate for the summer institute program.

X. Post Action Officer is Randiane Peccoud, 33-1-43-12-45-

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Y. Ditto.

STAPLETON